



F-16s will be shot down, warns Putin

Russia has no designs on any NATO country and will not attack Poland, the Baltic States or the Czech Republic but if the West supplies F-16 fighters to Ukraine then they will be shot down by Russian forces, President Vladimir Putin said late on Wednesday. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has triggered the deepest crisis in Russia's relations with the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. (Details on Page 8)



'Crypto king' Bankman-Fried gets 25-year sentence for orchestrating \$8b fraud

Disgraced cryptocurrency wunderkind Sam Bankman-Fried was sentenced to 25 years in jail on Thursday following his conviction in one of the biggest financial fraud cases in history. US prosecutors were seeking a prison term of 40-50 years after a New York jury found Bankman-Fried, known by his initials SBF, guilty in November following a five-week trial that probed the one-time high roller's spectacular fall. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Guard of Honour

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is reviewing Guard of Honour at Naval Headquarters on Thursday.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits Naval Headquarters

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with Federal Ministers visited Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. Upon arrival, Prime Minister was welcomed by the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf and was presented Guard of Honour by a smartly turned out naval contingent. The Prime Minister also laid a floral wreath at the Shuhada monument and afterwards was introduced to the Principal Staff Officers of Naval Headquarters.

During the meeting, matters pertaining to the Regional Maritime Security milieu and operational readiness of the Pakistan Navy were discussed. Naval Chief apprised the Prime Minister on roles, capabilities and future modernization plans of Pakistan Navy.

Later on a detailed briefing was presented by Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) on the prevailing maritime environment, challenges being faced by Pakistan Navy and response by Pakistan Navy to meet the challenges. The PM was especially apprised about the capability requirements of Pakistan Navy to meet the current and future challenges being faced by the country in the maritime domain. The dignity was also apprised of measures to benefit from economic prospects of the maritime sector. The PM appreciated the services of Pakistan Navy to safeguard the maritime interest of the country despite limited resources. He especially appreciated the professional response of the Pakistan Navy to foil the recent terrorist attack on Naval Airbase Turbat. The Prime Minister stressed that a strong economy holds the key to meet all the challenges faced by the country. Towards the end, the Prime Minister also visited the Command Operations Centre of Pakistan Navy.

The Naval Chief thanked the Prime Minister for his visit and reposing his confidence in the Navy. He also assured that Pakistan Navy with the help of Allah SWT will continue to defend the country's sea frontiers & maritime interests and will shoulder the responsibilities with honour both during peace and war.

Won't tolerate executive interference in judiciary: CJP Isa

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa said on Thursday that executive interference would not be tolerated in the affairs of judiciary, two days after six out of eight Islamabad High Court judges raised the matter in a letter to the Supreme Judicial Council.

"Interference by the executive in the affairs and judicial workings of judges will not be tolerated and under no circumstances can independence of the judiciary



be allowed to be compromised," CJP Isa was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the Supreme Court.

He said this during a meeting with PM Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Thursday. The premier was accompanied by Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and AGP Mansoor Awan. Puisne SC judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah was also in the meeting.

The CJP and the senior puisne judge said that "independence of the judiciary is a foundational pillar that upholds the rule of law and a strong democracy."

The statement was issued after a second full court meeting earlier today after a meeting with PM Shehbaz.

It mentioned that the CJP received a letter dated March 25 from six – out of eight – judges of the Islamabad High Court on March 26. In the 12-page letter, the judges demanded that a judicial convention be summoned over

the alleged interference of intelligence agencies in the judiciary.

The six judges who signed the letter are Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani, Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Justice Babar Sattar, Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, and Justice Rafat Intiaz.

The concerns of all the judges were heard individually in a meeting called by CJP Isa. The meeting lasted for over two and a half hours.

Federal Interior Minister and KP Chief Minister discuss peace & security



Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur held discussions on matters related to peace and security in the province here on Thursday. The Interior Minister visited the Chief Minister's House in Peshawar to discuss law and order and other security issues with Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

They both agreed on improving coordination between federal and provincial authorities to enforce laws aimed at enhancing peace and security in the province. They condemned the recent

attacks on Chinese nationals and expressed sympathy with the Chinese government and families of the deceased. It was decided in the meeting to bring the perpetrators of the incident to justice and eradicate terrorism. Ali Amin Gandapur emphasized that peace and security are top priorities for the provincial government and ensuring the protection of life and property of the people is the foremost objective. He mentioned that efforts would be made to strengthen the police and other law enforcement agencies in the province. The Chief Minister also stated that concrete steps would be taken under a coherent strategy to achieve this objective.

Misinformation, disinformation, fake news problems of entire world: Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Thursday that misinformation, disinformation, and fake news were problems of the entire world which had to be controlled. During a meeting with the Political Counselor of the British High Commission Miss Zoe Ware, the minister said the biggest challenge on social media was fake news and the government was dealing with this problem.

In the meeting, relations between the two countries, and the promotion of cooperation in the fields of media were discussed in detail.



Cooperation in the fields of film and drama was also discussed. Attaullah Tarar said that journalists should adopt the process of verification on social media and the whole world should develop a code of conduct related to social media.

Miss Zoe Ware congratulated the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) on forming the government and Attaullah Tarar on assuming charge as Minister of Information and Broadcasting.

Inquiry commission to probe allegations levelled by judges: Law Minister

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has announced that a commission of inquiry will probe the allegations levelled by six Islamabad High Court judges, who wrote a letter to the chief justice of Pakistan earlier this week.

An impartial retired judge would lead the one-member commission, Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar told a press conference on Thursday, shortly after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with CJP Qazi Faez Isa.



He said the notification on the formation of the inquiry commission will be issued within two or four days after deciding its TORs (Terms of Reference) at a cabinet meeting.

In response to a question, Tarar said he strongly believed the commission should also investigate the allegation that court verdicts against PMLN in 2017-2018 were the result

of interference in the judiciary.

Tarar, however, refused to respond to the question of whether the judges had committed a 'misconduct' by writing the letter. It was a matter for the judiciary to decide internally, he said.

He said there would be no compromise on the independence of the judiciary.

Tarar said the prime minister believed there should be no inference in the working of institutions.

He said the letter was widely circulated on mainstream and social media.

US prioritizes commitment to resolve energy crisis in Pakistan

News Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States reaffirmed that it prioritizes its commitment to resolving the energy crisis in Pakistan.

State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said that the US helped Pakistan in generating an additional 4,000 megawatts of clean energy.

He maintained that such projects have increased the energy production capacity of Pakistan, enabling it to provide electricity to millions.

The spokesperson reiterated that both countries will work together to combat the environmental challenges through the green alliance.

Earlier, the United States advised Pakistan to halt the Pak-Iran Gas Pipeline Project, as engaging in business with Iran poses the risk of encountering U.S. sanctions," said State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller during a press briefing.

"I'm not going to preview any potential sanctions, but we

always advise everyone that doing business with Iran carries the risk of encountering our sanctions, and we would advise everyone to consider that very carefully," he added.

"As the Assistant Secretary made clear last week, we do not support this pipeline moving forward," he recalled.

A few months ago, the Pakistani caretaker government had approved the completion of the Pakistan-Iran pipeline project. However, following this approv-

al, the United States officially expressed its concerns to Pakistan. After American reservations were voiced, Pakistan once again halted the implementation of the project.

In response to a question, Miller also condemned the terrorist attack on Chinese engineers in Pakistan, stating, "We condemn the attack on a convoy of PRC engineers in Pakistan. We are deeply saddened by the loss of life and injuries sustained and extend our heartfelt condolences

to those affected by the attack."

"The Pakistani people have suffered greatly at the hands of terrorists," he said, "and Chinese nationals in Pakistan have also been victims of terrorist attacks. No country should suffer such acts of terror."

When asked about a letter from judges in Pakistan, the spokesperson said that he had seen the letter but had not yet consulted with his colleagues, so he would refrain from commenting.

PM AJK strongly condemned, terrorist attack on Chinese nationals

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the Chinese nationals in Shangla and termed the attack as a nefarious attempt to create a wedge



between Pakistan and China. He said that such despicable and dastardly acts cannot hurt or weaken the historic and all weather cooperation and relations between the two countries, which he said was higher than the mountains and deeper than oceans.

The Pakistani nation will thwart any such designs of the enemy at every level", he said, adding the armed forces of Pakistan were ready to root out the scourge of terrorism from the country. He also expressed his heartfelt condolences to the families of the Chinese citizens who lost their lives in the tragic incident.

Group photo with Angels

ISLAMABAD: A group photo of Angels and Fairies of Pakistan Sweet Home with PPP leaders Nadeem Afzal Chan, Syed Nayyar Bukhari, Faisal Kareem Kundi, Zamurd Khan and other at Pakistan Sweet Home in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Governor announces launch of IT University in Hyderabad

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Governor Sindh Mohammad Kamran Tesori has said that modern Education is indispensable for the development and prosperity of any society that is why after starting the IT course for the youth in Governor House Karachi,

50 thousand students after taking test would be provided IT Education in Hyderabad and its website would be launched tonight. Governor Sindh informed that IT program was being started at a cost of Rs 500 million of which not a single rupee was taken from the government as donors had been arranged in this regard while a team of IT experts would play an important role to make this programme successful. He termed the IT programme as silver lining in the sable clouds for youth. He was given press briefing regard-



ing IT programme in Hyderabad Press Club yesterday. Governor Sindh said that the website of the program would be launched from tonight, after which the IT University would be established and for that with the consultation of stakeholders land would be identified soon. He informed that from basic course to Arti-

ficial Intelligence course would be conducted in the IT university adding that after completing the course the youth would be able to earn hundreds of thousands rupees.

He said that under the IT programme the test would be conducted within two months. He said this programme was a ray of hope

for the disappointed youth which would prove to be very important for the economy of the country. On this occasion Ziaullah of Governor Initiative Programme, MNAs and MPAs of Hyderabad, experts of IT Programme, Director General Public Relations Sindh Saleem Khan and others were also present on the occasion.

Chaghtai meets WAMI in Riyadh to discuss basic needs of the region

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RIYADH: A delegation of Azad Kashmir under the leadership of Minister of Elementary and Secondary Education Dewan Ali Khan Chaghtai called on Secretary General of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, a well-known international organization, Dr. Saleh Sulaiman here yesterday. The delegation included Chairman District Council Muzaffarabad Sardar Imtiaz Ahmad Abbasi, Retired Secretary Government Khawaja Ahsan, Member District Council Muzaffarabad Chaudhry Asif Yaqoob, Muhammad Fayyaz and Political Attaché of the Pakistani Embassy in Saudi Arabia Muhammad Inam, an international charity organization of Saudi Arabia. Meeting with Secretary General of WAMI, Dr. Saleh Sulaiman Al-Wahibi, the delegation discussed the basic infrastructure of Azad Kashmir in the Dahi and backward areas, including school buildings, clean drinking water, construction of washrooms in public places, health facilities, and the basic needs

Jahangir Khan Tareen visits Amna Girls College in Lodhran



Quratul Ain Asim/ Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Jahangir Khan Tareen, the Famous Political Leader, Top Class industrialist and Social Leader of Pakistan, arrived in Lodhran. Jahangir Khan Tareen reviewed the construction work of Amna Girls College Lodhran. On this occasion, Akbar Khan, CEO of Tareen Education Foundation gave a detailed briefing to Jahangir Khan Tareen regarding the ongoing construction work on the project. By Jahangir Khan Tareen has donated 5 and a half acres of land for the Amna girls college Lodhran while the college project will cost more than 60 crore rupees. On this occasion, Jahangir Khan Tareen expressed his determination that God willing, he will continue to serve the people of Lodhran through welfare projects. Jahangir Khan Tareen said that the proportion of women in the population of Pakistan is 57%. Tareen Foundation will continue its project for women education. On this occasion, Jahangir Khan Tareen said that it is the mission of me and my family to make girls highly educated. Women of Lodhran district can make a high position in the society by reading and writing. And in every field especially medical. Engineering. Army. Civil Services and Information Technology. By working in many fields other than nursing, you can make the name of Pakistan apart from your family and Lodhran district shine.

Pakistan National Saraiki Council will be Celebrate Flowers Day: Dharija



Kiran Asim / Arshad Raza Zaidi

MULTAN: Pakistan National Saraiki Council Will Be Celebrate Flowers Day On First April not April Fool. and a grand event will be held on the river Chenab. These views were expressed by Sirakistan National Council Chairman Zahoor Dharija while addressing the consultation meeting held in connection with the annual April Fool's Day celebration. Saraiki leaders Mian Shahzad Akram Ghalo, Mian Azhar and others were present in the meeting. Zahoor Dharija said that on April 1 at 3 o'clock, a ceremony will be held at Langriyalpatan of Chenab river and flowers will be thrown in Chenab river. He said that the people of Wasib will continue to resist against the false ideas of the West. Saraiki Wasib is one of the oldest civilizations in the world, our region is the land of seven rivers and Wasib people love rivers. It is our request that flowers should not be thrown in the rivers. He said that the biggest problem in the world is pollution and non-availability of clean water. He said that millions of fish died due to toxic water in the rivers this year and aquatic life suffered the worst. No action was taken by the government. Zahoor Dharija said that I congratulate the people of Wasib that the people of Wasib are giving a message of goodness to the world by doing a unique program of their kind.

DFP warns of growing human rights violations in disputed territory

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) has expressed grave concern over the worsening political and human rights situation, harassment of Hurriyat leaders and their families, termination of Kashmiri employees and confiscation of civilians' properties by Indian occupation authorities in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal in a statement issued in Srinagar said that Narendra Modi-led fascist Indian government had intensified its brutalities against the Kashmiris to punish them for challenging India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said Indian troops operating under the protection of draconian laws have unleashed a reign of terror in the occupied territory. "Innocent people are being harassed and humiliated during cordon and search operations", the spokesman said, adding that extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, terminating government employees from their jobs and confiscation of civilians' properties and killing of youth in fake encounters are being used by India as a war tactic to suppress Kashmiris' legitimate struggle for right to self-determination". He said that since 1989 hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris have been killed by the Indian army. He said that the massive troops' concentration in the region has led to gross human rights violations in the region.

Iqbal said that Modi regime was terrorizing the families of Hurriyat leaders by attaching their houses and properties. He maintained that such mean tactics will not deter the Hurriyat leaders from pursuing the collective cause of freedom from India for which the Kashmiris have given unprecedented sacrifices.

He said that the international human rights organizations must take stock of the situation and play their due role to bring an end to the brutalities being inflicted on Kashmiri people by Indian troops.

Revolutionizing Pakistan's Textile-to-Textile Recycling Industry

Abdul Majeed

Transformative Partnership between National Textile University, Reverse Resources and KnowTex Reverse Resources (RR) and the National Textile University (NTU) under the umbrella of KnowTex have joined forces in a groundbreaking initiative aimed at transforming Pakistan's textile-to-textile (T2T) recycling landscape.



This collaborative effort seeks to establish a structured framework for anaging textile waste, ensuring transparency, and enabling verifiable traceability in the recycling process. RR has launched this project in collaboration with partner's institutions. This project is very beneficial for the local industry, and it will help them to address the different legislative requirements of Pakistani textiles importing countries. The project is likely to solve the following the biggest challenges of textile waste recycling of Pakistan.

Sports important for Society and Human Life: Rana Ayoub Khan



Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Chief Executive Officer Mapco Engineer Rana Muhammad Ayub Khan has said that sports are very important in any society and Human Life.

Sports are an example to test any society. MEPCO management is actively supporting sports and MEPCO players are also encouraged to promote sports.

He said while addressing the clos-

ing ceremony of badminton tournament at MEPCO Sports Complex. President of Mapco Sports Association, Chief Engineer Planning and Engineering Chaudhry Khalid Mehmood said that indoor games are being played diligently in the Mapco Sports Complex, which has been developed at a cost of crores of rupees for the promotion of sports, and the children of Mapco employees are also playing. Sports opportunities are being provided.

RamazanBadminton tournament has been organized in Mapco Sports Complex during Mubarak, in which 8 teams of women and men participated and demonstrated their sports. In the officers' final match, Engineer Imran Umar Lodhi defeated Chaudhry Khalid Mehmood, while in the women's final match. Miss Hina to Shazia Noreendefeated Chief Executive Officer MEPCO Engineer Rana Muhammad Ayub Khan gave the shield to President MEPCO

Sports Association Chaudhry Khalid Mahmood for organizing the tournament, while giving shields to Additional Axin Peran Ghasib Sub Division Engineer Imran Umarlodhi and Miss Hina on this occasion.

In-charge Regional Complaint CentreAbdul Hafeez Bhatti, Manager MAPCO Badminton Team Moham-mad Ali Tahir, Sports Officer Razia Sultana, Director General Mirad Sohail Bhatti and other officers were also present.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:37 am
Zohr	12:13 pm
Asr	4:39 pm
Maghrib	6:26 pm
Isha	7:50 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

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PIA Cargo	9280979
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Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHO	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3

Stakeholders unanimously reject exorbitant increase in property taxes by MCI

PPA

ISLAMABAD: All the stakeholders have unanimously rejected the recently imposed exorbitant increase in property tax by the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad.

This has been decided at a meeting held at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry with its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari in chair.

The meeting was largely attended by representatives of all the stakeholders of the capital city.

They said that in the absence of a local government the Metropolitan Corporation has no moral ground or authority to enhance or impose new taxes and make policy decisions.

The participants said that some time back, the MCI had increased the property tax and the Chamber moved the Islamabad High Court deciding that the interim setup of MCI could not impose taxes and that such policy decisions can only be taken by the elected representatives of the local government. It was also unanimously decided



that if these illogically and irrational taxes are not withdrawn, a series of peaceful protests will be launched as well as contempt of court pleas will also be filed to get reverse the decision.

The house also decided to contact the elected representatives of the capital city and ask them to come forward and help prevent the imposition of these highly objectionable taxes. It was also decided that differ-

ent committees will be formed and all the available channels will be used to oppose this inhuman move by the MCI.

The meeting was also attended by Khalid Iqbal Malik, Malik Zubair Ahmed, Ejaz Abbasi, Ajmal Baloch, Kashif Chaudhry, Sardar Tariq, Asad Aziz, Shahzad Shabbir Abbasi, Zahi Qureshi, Khalid Chaudhry, Tahir Abbasi and Raja Hassan Akhtar.

CTO orders officials to maintain smooth flow of traffic on roads

PNP

ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the special directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police remains actively engaged in maintaining smooth traffic flow in the federal capital.



In this regard, Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad conducted a meeting at Traffic Headquarters Faizabad, which was attended by zonal DSPs and other senior officers, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the meeting discussed intensifying crackdowns on vehicles with tinted glasses, fancy and unauthorized number plates to further accelerate during the last ten days of Ramadan and take effective measures regarding traffic arrangements.

Additionally, it was also decided to depute additional personnel to resolve parking issues outside major commercial centers of the city for the convenience of citizens coming for shopping during the last ten days of Ramadan, along with issuing special directives to DSPs for improving traffic flow during rush hours.

On this occasion, the CTO Islamabad said that every possible step would be taken to provide unimpeded travel facilities, including parking and smooth flow of traffic, for citizens coming for shopping, with adherence to traffic laws during the last ten days of Ramadan, ensuring the continuity of traffic flow in the city.

No respite from crimes as criminals rule the roost in Hazro

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: There is no respite from the crimes in various parts of Hazro as criminals up against arms against masses rule the roost in commercial and residential areas depriving masses from cash and valuables worth millions of rupees as area police seem in deep slumber. In back to back crimes in the area, in the first incident, wife of a US citizen of Pakistan origin was shot dead for resisting during domestic robbery. According to Police sources, Muhammad Zahid Khan- resident of Mohalla Meerabad in the limits of Hazro Police station went to the mosque to offer Tarvech prayers. A gang of armed bandits forcefully entered his house and took hostage his 55 years old wife Sajida Bibi. As they were fleeing, the house lady resisted and subsequently they shot her dead and fled with looted booty including cash and gold ornaments worth Rs 2.50 million. In second day broad light robbery incident, Nazir was going to his home town Jatial after drawing 0.6 million rupees from a bank when two persons riding on a motorcycle intercepted him and on gun point snatched cash from him and fled away successfully. In the second incident Abdul Shabbir was going to his home town Bangi after drawing cash worth Rs 0.4 million from local bank when three persons riding on a motorcycle intercepted him and on gun point snatched cash from him and fled with looted booty. Social and public circles under the banner of Chach Muhafiz committee on Thursday met over the chair of Naseer Jadoon and they have condemned the poor law and order situation in the rural and urban areas of the district especially Hazro All the participants wear black ribbons with their hands to protest the growing lawlessness in the area and express solidarity with the victims.

Fauji Fertilizer Company Holds 46th Annual General Meeting

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Fauji Fertilizer Company (FFC) held its 46th Annual General Meeting on March 26th, 2024 having a quorum of 57.20 percent with representation either in person or through Video Conferencing and proxies. Individual shareholders as well as all major equity holders including Fauji Foundation, State Life Insurance Corporation, Citi Bank, Deutsche Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, NAFA, NIT, APF, Atlas and representatives from various other Corporate bodies and institutions attended the meeting.

Brig Zulfikar Ali Haider, SI(M) (Retd), Company Secretary FFC, opened the house. The Chairman FFC Board of Directors, Mr. Waqar Ahmed Malik welcomed the participants of the meeting. Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer FFC, Mr. Sarfaraz Ahmed Rehman apprised the shareholders about performance of the Company during the year 2023.

Mr. Sarfaraz Ahmed Rehman while responding to various queries from shareholders, informed the house about goals and future strategy of the Company. He further assured FFC's commitment to achieve higher standards of performance and to provide sustained earnings to the valued shareholders, despite the challenging economic circumstances.

Pakistan Youth Parliament organizes Iftar dinner

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The Pakistan Youth Parliament organized a lavish Iftar dinner in honor of the orphans living at the Aghosh Orphanage in Faisalabad, a powerful show of kindness and unity. Project Esaar e Ramzan, an ongoing social responsibility initiative, aims to lift the morale of the poor and alleviate their sense of isolation during the holy month of Ramadan. The Iftar dinner, where the children were treated with utmost devotion, exemplified the Youth Parliament's steadfast commitment to serving the community and uplifting those in need. Under the inspiring leadership of President Muhammad Abu Bakr, the Pakistan Youth Parliament has embarked on a mission to provide compassion and assistance to orphans across the country. Member of Provincial Assembly Sardar Nadeem Sadiq Dogar, who participated as the chief guest on the occasion, remarked that "I am very impressed by the warmth and hospitality of these deserving children." "Youth Parliament's dedication to community service is truly commendable, and events like this reaffirm our collective responsibility to care for the most vulnerable among us. Central President Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra has said that I cannot express the peace of mind that has been gained by having iftar dinner with orphans. These children are also a part of our society. Dr. Dogar appreciated the efforts of the Youth Parliament in organizing such a meaningful event and emphasized the importance of fostering a culture of compassion and empathy in the society. President Muhammad Abubakar thanked all the participants and volunteers who made the event a success. "At the Pakistan Youth Parliament, we believe in the transformative power of compassion and solidarity. By coming together to help orphans, we not only bring smiles to their faces but also sow seeds of hope for a brighter future. Guests including Mr. Alhaj Naseer Yusuf Wahra, Noman Majeed Khan, Project Coordinator Malik Muhammad Waqas Awan, Uzair Rabbani, Umair Chand and Mr. Tayyab also attended. The children had a wonderful evening with memorable gifts, joyful company and delicious food generously served by the hosts and attendees. Through such initiatives, Pakistan Youth Parliament is making a positive impact on the lives of marginalized communities across the country.

Brighten

ISLAMABAD: Grand Faisal Mosque illuminated for the last Ashra of holy fasting month of Ramadan, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Ministry of NHSR & C, PM&DC and WFME Pledge Collaboration

PNP

ISLAMABAD: President of The World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) Mr. Ricardo León-Bórquez has called on Federal Secretary Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSR & C), Iftikhar Ali Shallwani, and President of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC), Dr. Rizwan Taj, to discuss the challenges faced by Pakistani medical students studying abroad. The meeting, which was also attended by consultant PMDC on International Coordination, Mr. Farzand, focused on various aspects concerning the quality of medical education, recognition of Pakistani students qualified from foreign medical insti-



tutions, and the welfare of Pakistani medical students pursuing education overseas.

During the meeting, Secretary Iftikhar Ali Shallwani and President PM&DC highlighted the close collaboration between the Ministry of NHSR & C, PM&DC and medical institutions in Pakistan. Secretary Iftikhar Ali Shall-

wani and President PM&DC expressed concern over the difficulties faced by these students in obtaining recognition for their qualifications upon returning to Pakistan. He reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring the welfare and recognition of Pakistani medical students studying abroad and vowed to work closely with relevant stakeholders to effectively address the challenges faced by them.

President WFME explained that their organization's directory of medical institutions currently provides information on the total number of institutions in a country, regardless of recognition status. He said that efforts were underway to enhance the directory by including specific accreditation details of medical institutions from recognized agencies.

Furthermore, a proposal was put forward to establish a forum comprising international accreditation agencies. The forum would convene regularly to address and resolve the recognition challenges encountered by Pakistani medical students studying abroad.

26% increase on tobacco tax can reduce PKR 300bn in health cost

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) has urged the government to reduce the health cost burden by increasing taxes on cigarettes. Tobacco use, particularly smoking, is linked to a plethora of health issues, including lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, respiratory diseases, and various other cancers. Smoking-related illnesses and deaths cost Pakistan 1.6% of its GDP annually. The earlier individuals start smoking, the higher their risk of developing these health problems later in life.

Malik Imran Ahmad, Country Head Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK), said that smoking-related illnesses cost a significant portion of the economy for their

treatment. One effective strategy to discourage tobacco use and to save our youth and healthcare systems, as well as the economy, is to increase taxes on cigarettes. He urged for a 26.6% FED increase on cigarettes in 2024, which can recover 19.8% of healthcare costs spent on smoking-related diseases. The government needs to immediately increase cigarette taxes in the federal budget 2024-25 to earn an additional 17 billion in revenue.

Ahmad further discussed that studies have shown that higher prices are cost barriers that lead to decreased tobacco consumption, especially among youth and low-income individuals. By making cigarettes more expensive, higher taxes can deter young people from initiating smoking. Moreover, the revenue



generated from tobacco taxes can be used for improved public health initiatives and healthcare services, further contributing to efforts to discourage tobacco use and mitigate its harmful effects on society.

Dr. Khalil Ahmad Dogar, Program Manager at SPARC, said youth are more price-sensitive than adults, so increases in cigarette prices can have a significant impact on their decision-making regarding tobacco use. He stated that research has consistently shown that raising tobacco taxes is one of the most effective ways to reduce smoking rates. Lower smoking rates result in improved public health outcomes, including a reduced incidence of smoking-related diseases and premature deaths.

Dr. Khalil emphasized that discouraging tobacco use among youth is critical for safeguarding public health, and increasing taxes on cigarettes is a proven strategy to achieve this goal while also generating revenue for public health programs.

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The Role of Journalism in National Defense - II

Abdul Basit Alvi

What is more regrettable Journalism serves as the bedrock of democracy, furnishing vital information, analysis, and oversight necessary for an enlightened citizenry. Across the globe, journalists occupy a crucial role in holding power accountable, uncovering truths, and stimulating public discourse. As societies confront complex challenges and contend with evolving threats to freedom and accountability, the indispensability of journalism as a guardian of democracy cannot be overstated. At its essence, journalism acts as a check on power, scrutinizing governments, corporations, and institutions to ensure transparency and accountability. Through investigative reporting, journalists expose corruption, abuse of authority, and wrongdoing, thereby upholding the integrity of democratic institutions and ensuring leaders remain answerable to the public. Journalism also plays a pivotal role in informing citizens about issues, events, and developments that shape their lives and communities. Through impartial reporting and analysis, journalists provide the context necessary for individuals to make informed decisions as engaged members of society. By empowering citizens with knowledge and understanding, journalism fosters civic participation, dialogue, and informed discourse essential for a

thriving democracy. A free and independent press is essential for preserving freedom of expression, a fundamental human right in democratic societies. Journalists serve as frontline defenders of this right, challenging censorship and repression while providing a platform for diverse viewpoints and facilitating open debate. Furthermore, journalism advocates for social justice, human rights, and equality by amplifying the voices of marginalized and oppressed communities. Through investigative reporting, feature stories, and advocacy journalism, reporters illuminate issues such as poverty, discrimination, and injustice, raising societal consciousness and rallying public support for change. By amplifying the voices of marginalized individuals, journalism serves as a catalyst for positive social change. In an increasingly interconnected world, journalism acts as a bridge between cultures and nations, fostering mutual understanding, empathy, and solidarity. International reporting brings distant events and global issues to the forefront, promoting cross-cultural dialogue and recognition of our shared humanity. By dismantling stereotypes and fostering empathy, journalism contributes to a more interconnected and compassionate world. National defense extends beyond the purview of military forces and government agencies; it also relies on the vigilance and commitment of journalists who act as watchdogs, informants, and communicators in matters of security.

In the modern age, journalism plays a crucial role in national defense by providing essential oversight, investigative reporting, and public awareness on security threats, military operations, and homeland defense. Understanding the interdependent relationship between journalism and national defense is vital for safeguarding the interests and safety of a nation's populace. Journalism serves as a vital mechanism for oversight and accountability within the sphere of national defense. Investigative reporters uncover instances of misconduct, corruption, and mismanagement, ensuring transparency and accountability to the public. By scrutinizing defense policies, procurement practices, and military conduct, journalists hold decision-makers accountable and uphold the integrity of defense institutions. Journalists also play a crucial role in informing the public about national security threats, geopolitical developments, and defense strategies, enabling citizens to grasp the complexities of modern security challenges and actively participate in discussions on defense policies and priorities. Investigative journalism often exposes vulnerabilities within the national defense apparatus, from cybersecurity gaps to deficiencies in border security, prompting policymakers and defense officials to address systemic flaws and implement reforms to bolster national security preparedness. Additionally, investigative reporting can uncov-

er threats posed by espionage, terrorism, or foreign interference, alerting authorities and the public to imminent dangers. Journalism advocates for military ethics, adherence to international law, and respect for human rights in the context of national defense by reporting on allegations of human rights abuses, war crimes, and violations of the laws of armed conflict, holding military forces accountable for their actions. Journalism fosters public discourse and national unity by providing a platform for diverse voices and perspectives on matters of national defense. Through opinion pieces, expert analysis, and commentary, journalists stimulate debate, challenge assumptions, and encourage dialogue on defense policies and strategies. By promoting a sense of shared purpose and collective responsibility, journalism bolsters national unity and resilience in the face of security threats and challenges. In today's media landscape, concerns about negative journalism—marked by sensationalism, bias, and misinformation—are prevalent. While journalism remains a cornerstone of democracy, the spread of negative narratives can corrode public trust, deepen polarization, and impede constructive dialogue. Nonetheless, combating negative journalism necessitates proactive strategies aimed at promoting truth, balance, and ethical reporting.

To be continued



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Azmat)

UN report reveals 212 Gaza schools 'directly hit' by Israel

Israel's relentless bombardment of Gaza has resulted in "direct hits" on 212 schools within the besieged enclave since Oct 7, according to an analysis partnered with the United Nations. Satellite imagery pointed to at least 53 schools "totally destroyed" since conflict erupted on 7 October 2023 and a near nine per cent increase in attacks on school premises since mid-February, according to the report released Wednesday by the UN Children's Fund, (UNICEF) and NGOs the Education Cluster and Save The Children. The "high trend of attacks on school facilities" has worsened the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, the report's authors noted, amid "intense Israeli bombardment from air, land, and sea across much of the Gaza Strip". Of the 563 school buildings in Gaza, 165 of the 212 that received a direct hit are in areas designated for evacuation by the Israeli military. Data indicates that 62 schools were directly targeted in southern Khan Younis governorate, 14 in the Middle Area governorate, 94 in Gaza governorate, and 42 in North Gaza governorate – which is the most severely affected area to date, with 86.2 per cent of school buildings either directly hit or damaged. More than one in two school premises run by the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA have also been hit (57 per cent) since 7 October, according to the report, along with Government buildings targeted by Israeli shelling or during the ground operation. "No education is happening in Gaza at all for nearly six months," UNRWA said on Wednesday, upon publication of the UN-partnered report, which pointed to more than 625,00 students and 22,000 teachers attending school before 7 October. Additional findings derived from the satellite imagery and other sources "provide evidence for military use of schools" by Israeli Security Forces (ISF) "since the beginning of the escalation". This includes "several concerning reports, pictures and videos showing that schools are being used for military operations by ISF, including use as detention, interrogation centres and military bases". Satellite pictures in the report also showed military tanks, their tracks and craters from shelling in school premises in February. The UN-backed report also noted that more than 320 school buildings have been used by displaced people as shelters since the 7 October escalation. Of these facilities, 188 have been either directly hit (90) or damaged (98). Once conflict ends, at least 67 per cent of schools in Gaza "will either need full reconstruction or major rehabilitation work to be functional again" the report's authors maintained.

'Six Judges' Allegations: Yet Challenges in Substantiation...' - II

Moreover, given the gravity of the situation, it may be necessary for the Supreme Judicial Council to collaborate with other relevant institutions, such as law enforcement agencies or independent investigative bodies, to ensure a comprehensive and transparent investigation. Any attempts to obstruct or undermine the investigation must be met with swift and decisive action to uphold the rule of law and protect the judiciary from undue influence or intimidation. The Council may enlist the help of independent experts or investigative agencies to conduct forensic analysis or investigations into any suspicious activities or incidents reported by the judges. Although direct evidence may be scarce, expert analysis of circumstantial evidence or patterns of behavior may reveal potential links to interference or intimidation tactics. SJC may provide strong protections for whistleblowers who come forward with information about interference or intimidation. SJC can encourage individuals with

knowledge of such actions to step forward and provide valuable testimony. Ensuring confidentiality and protection from retaliation can help overcome barriers to reporting. In cases where traditional investigative methods may not yield sufficient evidence, the Council could consider establishing a public inquiry or commission with broad powers to investigate the allegations thoroughly. Such inquiries can compel testimony, gather evidence, and make recommendations based on their findings. Given the sensitive nature of the allegations and the challenges in investigating espionage-related activities, the Council may seek assistance and expertise from international organizations or experts with experience in dealing with similar issues. Regardless of the outcome of the investigation, the Council can implement measures to enhance judicial integrity and resilience against potential interference in the future. This may include strengthening security protocols, providing training on identifying and responding to intimidation tactics, and promoting a culture of trans-

parency and accountability within the judiciary. While proving allegations of interference and intimidation by spying agencies may indeed be challenging, the Supreme Judicial Council has a responsibility to thoroughly investigate such claims and take appropriate action to safeguard the independence and integrity of the judiciary. Even in the absence of direct evidence, the Council can still take steps to address the underlying concerns and uphold the principles of justice and the rule of law. Ultimately, the Supreme Judicial Council's response to these allegations will be a crucial test of the judiciary's independence and its ability to uphold the rule of law in the face of external pressures. It is essential for the Council to demonstrate its commitment to justice, accountability, and the protection of judicial independence by thoroughly investigating these allegations and holding accountable those responsible for any wrongdoing. Failure to do so would not only undermine public trust in the judiciary but also jeopardize the foundations of democracy and the rule of law in Pakistan. *The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former MD, SRBC*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Despair and hope

One line of thinking holds that, according to the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (2017-18), almost half of women in the age group 15-25 are uneducated, and 61 percent of rural women are illiterate. What complicates the matter is that Pakistan left no stone unturned in any sector to suck the blood of poor people to stave off. To cap these shortcomings, the constitution pulled no punches in Article 25A, in which: The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years. If we talk in apocalyptic terms about a state that could not even ensure its constitution, how will she ensure the fundamentals of 220 million people? Concomitantly, there is a constant tug of war between Article 25A and the de facto. Thereof, the Pakistan Economic Survey estimated that the literacy rate was recorded at 62.8 percent in the country, comprising 73.4 percent males and 51.9 percent females. To satisfy both optimists and pessimists, we bet to acknowledge that we are living in a very radicalized and extremist society where there is a one-size-fits-all approach to dictating that every individual falls under the umbrella of religious fanaticism. Contrary to that, Henry Kissinger says in his book World Order that "acceptance of reality is the denial of truth." What needs to be addressed is that we must have flexibility of thought in order to address the root cause of religious extremism. Machiavelli emphatically airs his view that "only a vibrant society can compete in the contemporary world." There are many unknowns going forward. What is not in doubt is that the government must strikingly go for quick-fix solutions and structural reforms in all outdated and mouth-eaten sectors. We mustn't extinguish the flame of hope and must wait for a better time to come. *The writer is a student of public administration at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.*

On cue, it is not futile to urge that all state machinery provide a level playing field for "hybrid democracy" to facilitate the beneficiaries. To dramatize it more plainly, I will expound that every Democratic Party was made to confess to the military line to come into power. Along with optimistic interpretations, it is pertinent to point out the stagnant and annihilated health sector, which is on a death bed. Pakistan's health indicators are hardly satisfactory. Far too many Pakistanis die preventable, early deaths, while debilitating diseases affect the quality of life and productivity of millions. What makes this situation even more disheartening is that state non-profit health institutions are mostly stagnant or working with poor standards. To look upon this through a factual spectrum, we must displease our ears that Pakistan spent 1.2% of its gross domestic product (GDP) on the public health sector in 2020-2021 as compared to 1.1 in 2019-2020, which is a zero-sum attempt to aggrandize the health sector. It is exasperating to see a Muslim state fall short of procuring the basic fundamental rights of 220 million people. People have already been smashed by skyrocketing inflation and unemployment. According to a survey conducted by Ipsos in March, inflation and unemployment were the top public concerns. At a time when more than 23 million children are out of school, the government spent only 1.7 percent of GDP on education during the last year, while the literacy rate was recorded at a little over 62 percent. The just-released Human Development Report 2023-24 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) places Pakistan in the low human development category. It shows Pakistan has slipped in the global human development index rankings from 161 to 164 out of 192 countries. In youth literacy, which is around 75 percent, Pakistan is second from the bottom in South Asia.



Analysis

Jalaluddin Kakar

China pursues new quality productive forces through innovation

Xinhua

BOAO, HAINAN: China's green and digital innovation is injecting great momentum into its efforts to develop new quality productive forces and promote high-quality development.

The remarks were made by government officials, entrepreneurs and scholars at a sideline forum during the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2024, underway in Boao in south China's Hainan Province from March 26 to 29.

New quality productive forces refer to advanced productivity freed from traditional economic growth modes and productivity development paths. It features high technology, high efficiency and high quality, and is in line with the new development philosophy.

As a major cooperation partner of BFA, China Energy Engineering Corporation Limited, a Global Fortune 500 company, has been participating in the annual conference for years, sharing innovation outcomes as well as green and low-carbon development solutions with global participants.

Noting that the goal of new quality productive forces is aligned with the company's growth strategy, Song Hailiang, chairman of the company, said at the sub-forum that innovation

is the core driving force of new quality productive forces and an engine for China's high-quality development.

The company has been actively pursuing innovation to develop new quality productive forces and foster new strategic industries, Song added. In 2023 alone, the company invested nearly 13 billion yuan (about 1.83 billion U. S. dollars) in research and development in power supply, power grid, new energy, energy storage, hydrogen energy, seawater desalination, and other fields.

Similar views were shared by Liu Yong, chairman and founder of DAS Solar, a Chinese high-tech enterprise that exemplifies innovation in the photovoltaic industry. According to him, the outstanding element of new quality productive forces should be innovation, as it is only through innovation that enterprises can attain core competitiveness.

"We are also pursuing innovation in the production and operation model," said Liu, noting that the company has built a fully intelligent and digital factory, realizing the whole-process smart production.

In addition to the energy sector, China's transportation industry has also actively pursued innovation during its development journey over

the years.

"China's transportation industry has made substantial headway since the reform and opening up. We have built the world's largest high-speed railway and expressway networks, as well as a world-class port cluster," said Li Yang, China's vice minister of transport. "The development of such huge transportation facilities is inseparable from technological innovation."

In recent years, China has also made vigorous efforts in green transition, injecting fresh impetus into its high-quality development while steadfastly pursuing its dual carbon goals of peaking carbon emissions by 2030 and reaching carbon neutrality by 2060.

China's dual carbon goals have put forward new challenges to the science and technology innovation in the energy sector, Gao Xiang, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, said at the forum.

Gao added that under the vision of carbon neutrality in the future, the energy structure will undergo tremendous changes and new technologies will play a significant role in promoting energy and industry transition and achieving high-quality development.

China is also sharing its high-quality development experience with other countries.



"China has done considerable work in energy and transportation innovation. China pursues green, innovative and high-quality development while achieving rapid economic growth," said Zafar Uddin Mahmood, policy advisor to the Secretary General of BFA.

For years, Pakistan has been engaged in cooperation with China

under the Belt and Road Initiative, with Chinese companies helping a lot in the development of Pakistan's energy and transportation sectors, Mahmood noted.

To share the fruits of China's high-quality development, Chinese companies have offered extensive expertise in industry development,

technological cooperation and energy sharing to global partners, Song said.

Last year, China Energy Engineering secured new overseas contracts worth over 280 billion yuan. In the past five years, contracts worth more than 500 billion yuan have been signed with Belt and Road partner countries and regions.

Security Council condemns 'barbaric' attack on Chinese in KPK Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The following Security Council press statement was issued today by Council President Yamazaki Kazuyuki (Japan):

The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the heinous and cowardly terrorist attack near Besham, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan on 26 March 2024 which resulted in the deaths of five Chinese nationals and one Pakistani national.

The members of the Security Council expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Governments of Pakistan and China, and they wished a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured.

The members of the Security Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

The members of the Security Council underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice.



They urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with the Governments of Pakistan and China, as well as all other relevant authorities in this regard.

The members of the Security Council reiterated that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed. They reaffirmed the need for all States to combat by all means, in accordance

with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

Palestine Foreign ministry welcomes the new precautionary measures from the International Court of Justice

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates welcomed the decision of the International Court of Justice to issue new temporary precautionary measures in line with the request of the State of South Africa in the face of the genocide committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

The Foreign Ministry indicated that the court's request for people for the 174th day in a row, exploiting the inability of the international community to implement its decisions and ensure the implementation of its unanimous will regarding the protection of civilians and the introduction of relief aid to them in a sustainable manner, as the occupation army continues to commit more



committed this heinous crime and emphasizes the importance of the United Nations institutions, and the rejection of Israel's use of starvation. As a weapon of war through the court's confirmation that there is a real famine in Gaza.

Affairs reaffirmed that the State of Palestine will join the plea submitted by South Africa against Israel and its commission of the crime of genocide.

The Foreign Ministry stressed that the International Court of Justice's mention of Security Council Resolution 2728 and the demand for a ceasefire emphasizes the necessity of immediately stopping the Israeli aggression against our people, bringing in aid, and preventing forced displacement in implementation of precautionary orders, and to prevent the crime of genocide.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates called on all countries to assume their

responsibilities as members of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and their membership in the International Court of Justice, to take the necessary measures to compel Israel to implement the court's precautionary measures, to prevent the genocide of the Palestinian people, hold Israel and its officials accountable for this crime, and hold them accountable for the consequences. Political, diplomatic and commercial. It also called on the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to complete the criminal investigation and punish Israeli officials, especially the perpetrators of the crime of genocide.

Israeli justifications for not implementing the Security Council resolution unacceptable

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continues to impose his agenda and method in the ongoing war of extermination on our people for the 174th day in a row, exploiting the inability of the international community to implement its decisions and ensure the implementation of its unanimous will regarding the protection of civilians and the introduction of relief aid to them in a sustainable manner, as the occupation army continues to commit more

Mass massacres against civilians as a result of brutal bombing of their homes over their heads, including children and women, and deepening the use of hunger and thirst as weapons in war and aggression, leading to the expansion of famine and the spread of food insecurity among more than a million Palestinians, and the entire population of the Gaza Strip is suffering from hunger.

In varying forms, in light of the famine's decisive spread and its control over the lives of citizens in the northern Gaza Strip, amid practical Israel-

li preparations to invade Rafah and expose the lives of the displaced and citizens to imminent danger, as well as escalating the attack on hospitals and all centers of human life, even if at a minimum, in the Gaza Strip, and the Israeli Prime Minister deliberately exports its crises to the Palestinian arena, the region, and the world, and deals with all parties with a policy of "paying the price" to mitigate the severity of these crises and prolong the survival of it and its ruling right-wing coalition.

The Ministry warns of the conse-

quences and dangers of international coexistence with the continued Israeli refusal to implement the latter's Council resolution calling for a ceasefire. It also warns of international laxity in following up on its implementation, and calls on the UN Security Council to take the necessary binding measures to achieve an immediate ceasefire, implement the resolution and follow up on its implementation, including it leads to ensuring the protection of civilians and the entry of humanitarian aid to all areas of the Strip in a sustainable manner, by land, air and sea.

Jam Kamal, Turkish Ambassador, strategize to boost bilateral trade to \$5 billion

Spokesman report

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet Pacaci recently met with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan to discuss bilateral relations and congratulate him on his new role.

During the meeting, Dr. Pacaci emphasized the importance of enhancing connectivity between Pakistan and Turkey to achieve their economic targets, including increasing bilateral trade to \$5 billion USD, a goal set by the leaders of both countries.

Minister Jam echoed the sentiment, highlighting the historical ties and the growing relations across various sectors such as economic, political, defense, culture, and education.

He also praised the recent signing of a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and expressed optimism about further expanding trade ties through additional Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) in near future in the commerce field.

Investing in China is investing in the future: top legislator

Xinhua

BOAO, HAINAN: China's top legislator Zhao Leji said on Thursday that investing in China is investing in the future as China's super-large market will continue to unleash great potential.

Zhao, chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, made the remarks in a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2024.

China will pursue shared development, Zhao said, adding that China is already a major trading partner of more than 140 countries and regions, a major source of investment for a growing number of countries, and one of the most important investment destinations for most countries.

"We sincerely welcome all countries to board the express train of China's development and join hands to realize world modernization featuring peaceful development, mutually beneficial cooperation and common prosperity," Zhao said.

Pakistan to bring perpetrator of Dasu terrorist attack to justice soon: Lin Jian



News Desk

BEIJING: Pakistan is intensively carrying out incident investigation and follow-up handling work, and has taken practical measures to strengthen the safety protection of Chinese personnel, projects and institutions, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Lin Jina said on Thursday. "We believe that Pakistan will be able to find out the truth as soon as possible and bring the murderer to justice," he told media during his regular briefing in response to a question about the last progress in the investigation and handling of the Dasu terrorist attack.

He informed that the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan are actively carrying out emergency response and aftermath work.

On March 27, the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong went to the project camp where the incident occurred to visit and express condolences to the Chinese employees. President Asif Ali Zardari came to the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan to express his condolences to the Chinese citizens who were killed in the incident, and promised to take resolute measures to bring the murderers to justice as soon as possible, he said. Lin Jian said that on the same day, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) issued a presidential press statement, strongly condemning the terrorist attack and expressing its deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and the governments of China and Pakistan. "We are willing to strengthen cooperation with the international community to combat all forms of terrorism and safeguard world peace and tranquility," he added. On March 26, five Chinese and one Pakistani nationals were killed in a terrorist attack on the vehicle of the Dasu Hydropower Project undertaken by a Chinese company in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
67,142.12	66,547.78
Day's High	Day's Low
67,246.02	66,690.94
Index Value	Change
12,290,536,975	+594.34
Percentage	Time
+0.89%	28 Mar, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
7,952.62	+20.64
Percentage	Time
+0.26%	28 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
39,776.00	+15.92
Percentage	Time
+0.040%	28 Mar, 1:46 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
40,168.07	-594.66
Percentage	Time
-1.46%	28 Mar, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.9	184.7
Bahrain Dinar	739.61	747.61
Canadian Dollar	204.25	206.45
China Yuan	38.74	39.14
Danish Krone	40.3	40.7
Euro	299.75	302.75
Hong Kong Dollar	35.55	35.9
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.44
Japanese Yen	1.86	1.94
Kuwaiti Dinar	901.14	910.14
Malaysian Ringgit	59.25	59.85
New Zealand \$	168.56	170.56
Norwegians Krone	26.19	26.49
Omani Riyal	724.36	732.36
Qatari Riyal	76.57	77.27
Saudi Riyal	73.7	74.4
Singapore Dollar	206.25	208.25
Swedish Korona	26.89	27.19
Swiss Franc	313.78	316.28
Thai Bhat	7.76	7.91
U.A.E Dirham	75.55	76.3
UK Pound Sterling	353.75	357.25
US Dollar	278.2	280.9

Taxes on elite should pay for power sector deficit

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Thursday that the high cost of electricity is the primary barrier to exporting goods.

He said that the per capita use of electricity has been steadily declining for the past five years, and the capacity charges will grow if the demand is not increased.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the power sector deficit should not be addressed by frequent tariff hikes but through the imposition of taxes on the elite.

The continuous increase in the cost of electricity, he said, is severely affecting the people and production sector. A substantial increase in production and exports is impossible without

making electricity cheaper.

He said that the current price of electricity is the biggest obstacle to exports and project-based development.

According to an estimate, a ten percent increase in the price of electricity reduces its use by three percent, he informed.

Due to the high cost of electricity, many industries and people have started using other sources, including gas and solar power. Therefore, the burden of capacity payments is increasing for the public.

If the demand for electricity does not increase by 15%, the capacity payments will increase by 50 percent.

The power sector is losing trillions of rupees, which is why electricity is getting more expensive. However, there is no focus on lowering the electricity price and compensating for the defi-



cit through taxes on the elite. The payments made to private-sector power plants are in dollars. Therefore, the

rupee's depreciation increases the volume of payments, indicating a need to link them to the local currency.

Rather than investing in highly efficient power plants, costly gas is currently going to captive power facilities that are only moderately efficient.

Reallocating the same gas to efficient power plants can decrease the generation cost. We should incentivize industries to re-join the grid, thereby reducing capacity charges.

He said that IPPs should be able to engage in bilateral agreements with private customers to sell any excess capacity to them, further distributing the burden of capacity charges.

It is expected that more industries and commercial businesses will go off-grid by setting up private energy-generating capacities, which will drive up capacity prices per unit, he warned.

Economic Cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Russian Ambassador to Pakistan, Albert Khorev met with the Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan. The two sides noted the great potential for the development of bilateral trade and emphasized the need to hold at an early date the 9th session of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation.



PBA appoints Muneer Kamal as new CEO & Secretary General

PPA

KARACHI: Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA) announces the retirement, with effect from, March 31, 2024, of its longstanding CEO & Secretary General, Mr Tawfiq A. Hussain. After more than a decade of meritorious service to the Association, Chairman Hussain leaves behind a legacy marked by notable achievements and substantial growth of the organization.

Following Tawfiq Hussain's retirement, the PBA Executive Committee unanimously selected Mr Muneer Kamal to be his successor and assume the role of the new CEO & Secretary General, effective April 1, 2024. Possessing over four decades of extensive banking experience, Muneer Kamal brings a wealth of expertise and insight to the role. His career in banking and financial services started with Citibank Pakistan and since then Muneer has assumed both local and international positions in various financial entities, includ-

ing as President & CEO of Faysal Bank and Union Bank. Muneer Kamal holds an MBA degree from the Institute of Business Administration, Karachi.

Muneer's diverse Corporate Governance experience includes having served as Chairman-Pakistan Stock Exchange, Chairman-National Bank of Pakistan, Director-Engro Corp, and Director-DH Corp. He is a member of the Board of Directors at Infra Zamin Pakistan, GSK Pakistan, Jubilee Life Insurance, National Clearing Company of Pakistan (NCCPL) and also serves as a member of the Board of Governors of the National University of Medical Sciences.

In light of the recent management changes, Mr Zafar Masud, Chairman - PBA commented, "On behalf of the PBA Executive Committee, I would like to welcome Mr Muneer Kamal as the new CEO & Secretary General of the Pakistan Banks' Association.

Onic & Careem sign MoU to forge strategic alliance

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Onic, the new digital telco brand in Pakistan and Careem, the leading ride-hailing platform in Pakistan, are thrilled to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to foster a strategic partnership to build a digital ecosystem for respective consumers in the country.

The MoU was signed by Omer Bin Tariq, Country Head, Onic Pakistan, and Imran Saleem, General Manager Ride Hailing, Careem Pakistan, in the presence of Hatem Bamatraf, President and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G. The ceremony marks the beginning of a collaborative journey between Onic and Careem that aims to combine expertise of both the brands to deliver innovatively enhanced customer experiences.

Speaking at the occasion, Hatem Bamatraf, President and Group CEO of PTCL & Ufone 4G, emphasized Onic's commitment to prioritizing the



needs of the Pakistani people. He stated, "Onic is dedicated to a larger vision for our customers, positioning itself as the forefront digital telco brand with a challenger mindset. We aspire to redefine the current landscape in Pakistan." Highlighting the significance of the collaboration with Careem,

Hatem added, "Our partnership with Careem marks a pivotal moment in our journey towards leveraging technology for positive change.

Commenting on the partnership, Imran Saleem, General Manager Ride Hailing, Careem Pakistan, said, "We are extremely excited to join forces with

Onic to drive innovation and shape the future of digital lifestyle within the country. This strategic partnership is in alignment with our purpose of simplifying and improving the lives of people as well as our commitment to delivering exceptional experiences to our customers."

Visa's Growing Services Business infused with New AI-Powered Products

PPA

LAHORE: Today, Visa (NYSE: V), a leader in digital payments, announced continued expansion of its global value-added services business with the addition of three new AI-powered risk and fraud prevention solutions. The new products, part of the end-to-end Visa Protect suite, are designed to reduce fraud across immediate account-to-account and card not present (CNP) payments, as well as transactions both on and off Visa's network.

Visa Protect is part of a broad suite of Visa value-added services that have grown to nearly 200 products, spanning five high-demand categories: Acceptance, Advisory, Issuing, Open Banking and Protect.

To help clients navigate a growing number of complexities, Visa has combined decades of expertise and significant investments in both AI and fraud preven-

tion, with \$10 billion over the last five years alone in technology and innovation, to help reduce fraud and increase network security.

"Digital payments go far beyond completing a sale - we are entering an era of modern commerce where winners move fast, AI is essential, experiences are flexible and security is native," said Antony Cahill, Global Head of Value-Added Services, Visa. "Businesses are looking for partners that can enable their ambitions to compete and win and we're proud to be the trusted partner helping a growing number of clients do exactly that in today's highly competitive environment."

Security and fraud prevention are fundamental to Visa. Last year, Visa helped block \$40 billion in fraudulent activity, nearly double from the year prior. Today's announcement focuses on three Visa Protect solutions that are intended to address client needs and utilize the company's deep expertise in AI.

Jazz Cash becomes SECP's strategic knowledge partner to propel Pakistan's Fintech Ecosystem

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with JazzCash, the country's largest fintech operator. This MoU fortifies JazzCash's role as SECP's knowledge partner. The partnership underscores a concerted effort to bolster digitalization and promote financial literacy.

The MoU delineates a comprehensive framework for leveraging JazzCash's expertise to fortify Pakistan's fintech ecosystem. Focusing on technical, educational, and regulatory enablers, the partnership aims

to empower individuals and businesses through knowledge-building initiatives.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, SECP Chairman Akif Saeed highlighted the crucial role of financial literacy in unlocking the country's potential, emphasizing the importance of empowering the entire ecosystem, including customers, MSMEs, and investors.

Jazz Cash and SECP will collaborate on multifaceted campaigns to raise awareness on critical issues such as customer protection, data security, and fraudulent activities, leveraging digital and customer service platforms.

Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz, said,



"The MOU between JazzCash and SECP heralds a strategic partnership aimed at transforming the financial sector through digital innovation.

Central to our alliance is the pursuit of technological advancements to improve consumer lending, accessibility, and efficiency.

Concerted efforts will be directed towards digitalising financial services, with a special emphasis on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Through joint initiatives, such as mentorship programs and business development trainings, JazzCash and SECP aim to empower businesses and entrepreneurs, fostering innovation and growth in the sector.

The MoU marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's journey towards a digitally empowered and financially inclusive society.

Bank AL Habib and ACE Money Transfer Partner Again to Empower Overseas Pakistanis

PPA

LAHORE: Understanding the crucial role remittances play in Pakistan's economic well-being, especially during the holy month of Ramadan, ACE Money Transfer, a leading remittance provider headquartered in Manchester, UK, and Bank AL Habib, one of Pakistan's premier commercial banks, have joined forces once again. This collaboration aims to incentivize overseas Pakistanis to send money home through legal channels while offering them the chance to win life-changing rewards.

The Power of Legal Remittances

Legal remittances contribute significantly to Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, aiding in economic growth and stability. Conversely, informal channels for sending money can be unreliable and pose security risks. Remittances are a vital lifeline for Pakistan's economy, and by incentivizing legal transfers through such meaningful rewards during Ramadan, ACE Money Transfer and Bank AL Habib play a key role in supporting national development and ensuring the well-being of countless families.

Rewarding Responsible Remittances

This year's Ramadan campaign by ACE Money Transfer and Bank AL Habib aims to capitalize on the traditional surge in remittances while incentivizing responsible financial practices. By sending money home via ACE Money Transfer to any Bank AL Habib account or choosing cash pickup from one of Bank AL Habib's 1100+ branches, Pakistani expats enter a series of lucky draws. The grand prize? Two lucky winners will each receive PKR 10 million. Additionally, a series of Umrah packages are also being offered, allowing winners to undertake the sacred pilgrimage during the holy month.

Mr. Rashid Ashraf, CEO of ACE Money Transfer, stated, "This collaborative effort transcends mere transactions. It acknowledges the profound significance of Ramadan, a time for spiritual reflection, generosity, and strengthening family bonds.

Mr. Aun Ali, Group Head - Business

More sports facilities to be built at Gaushala

Sports Desk

LAHORE: DG Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal visited Gaushala sports stadium on Thursday where he was accompanied by Director Youth Affairs Rana Nadeem Anjum, Project Director PMU Qaiser

Raza, DSO Lahore Tanveer Shah and TSO Ms Waqar Sikandar.

DG Sports Punjab was given a detailed briefing Project Director PMU Qaiser Raza about the Gaushala cricket ground and its prominent features.

Speaking on this occasion, Pervez

Iqbal said that a gymnasium hall, four badminton courts, mat wrestling arena, football ground, open and indoor gym for male and female athletes will be constructed at this site.

He directed the officials to improve the condition and cleanliness of the ground

so that the young players can take benefit from this sports facility to the maximum. "Sports Board Punjab is expanding the sports infrastructure to provide modern facilities to the players across the province in accordance with the vision of Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz," he added.

Two more matches decided in the Inter College Ramazan T-20 Cup

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Two more matches decided in the Inter College Ramazan T-20 Cup night matches at various cricket grounds. Government College 36-B Landhi and Government Jinnah College won their 2nd Matches. Ahad Ali and Rizwan Khan declared Players of the Match.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Pakistan Cricket Board.

Scores in Brief: Government College 36-B Landhi no.4 beat Government College Asifabad by 54 runs in their 2nd match at IBA Karachi University Ground. Government College 36-B Landhi no.4 125/8 in 20 overs. Suffiyan 44 2x4 3x6, Abdullah 36. Kashan



Farhad 3/13, Abdul Kabeer 2/11.

Government College Asifabad 71 all out in 18.1 overs. Uzair Shah 19. Muhammad Ahad Ali (ob) 4/9, Hasan Ali Khan 2/5, Saif Ullah Khan 2/18. After the end of the Match Chief Guest Former Test Cricketer Azam Khan gave the Player of the Match Cash award Rupees Five Thousand to Ahad Ali. Rahat Ali Shah

Coordinator, Arif Waheed, Afzal Qureshi and Aga Sabir also present on the occasion.

In the other Match played at EidGah Ground, Government Jinnah College beat Beacon House System by 9 wickets also in their 2nd match. Beacon House System 94 all out in 20 overs. Yafai Ali Khan 17. Ghous Ibrahim 2/11, Abdullah Ashfaq 2/17.

College 95/1 in 12.1 overs. Rizwan Khan 51 7x4 not out, Syed Kashan Fahim 19 not out.

After the end of the Match Chief Guest Ex International Cricketer Mahmood Hamid gave the Player of the Match Cash Award Rs.5000/= to Rizwan Khan. On this occasion Coordinator Rahat Ali Shah, Rizwan Qureshi also present.

Pakistan Cricket Board Announced Inter-Club One-Day Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The PCB has announced the Inter-Club One-Day tournament, which is set to take place in April across the 16 regions in the country. All registered cricket clubs (active and in-active) under the PCB Constitution 2014 shall be eligible to participate in the above tournament.

It is clarified that where latest scrutiny has been held after the election in 2023, that notified list will be considered as final.

Moreover, the PCB will also open the registration process for new clubs and the interested clubs may apply for fresh registration with the concerned District/Zonal Cricket Association in accordance with the provisions of Model Constitution of District/Zonal Cricket Association and may get playing rights.

The districts are tasked to finalise schedules. Initially, this will be monitored by the respective regions and later by the PCB.

Each club will play at least three matches in the pool stage. The tournament will be played as per PCB rules and regulations for One-Day matches.

The list of clubs that are participating in the tournament are available here.

Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi: "Club Cricket is a vital component of any national cricket structure and in Pakistan, it has a rich history of producing talented players. The PCB is committed to reviving the good old competitive culture of club cricket and engaging aspiring players at the club level. I am confident the PCB Inter-Club One-Day tournament will pay dividends and provide us with talented players."

Abdullah Khurram Niazi, Director - Domestic Cricket Operations: "We are delighted to announce the Inter-Club One-Day tournament across the 16 regions in the country. This tournament aims to provide quality and competitive cricket to hundreds of cricket clubs nationwide. As per Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi's vision, we look forward to arranging more than 6,000 matches in this tournament."

Sharfuddoula becomes first Bangladeshi on ICC elite umpire panel

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid said on Thursday it was a "great honour" to be named the first Bangladeshi

to join the International Cricket Council (ICC) Elite Panel of umpires.

Sharfuddoula, 47, who last year became the first umpire from Bangladesh to take charge of a World Cup match, had been on the international panel since 2006.

"It is a great honour to be named on the ICC Elite Panel," Sharfuddoula said in an ICC statement.

"To be the first from my country on the panel makes it extra special and I look forward to justifying the faith shown in me."

The elite umpire panel is responsible for officiating in the majority of men's Tests and one-day internationals, with the match referee panel also overseeing Twenty20 internationals as well.



Pak, NZ T20I series online ticket booking start today

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The tickets for the five-match T20I series between Pakistan and New Zealand will go on sale from Friday, 29 March.

The series will be played in Rawalpindi (18, 20 and 21 April) and Lahore (25 and 27 April). The matches are set to begin at 7:30pm.

In the first phase, the pre-booking of the online tickets will start on Friday at 5pm at pcb.tcs.com.pk. The sale of physical tickets along with outlet addresses will be announced in due course.

The tickets for Rawalpindi-leg will be available at a minimum cost of PKR 500 (Premium) and the maximum available at PKR 7,500 (VVIP Gallery). Additionally, the hospitality seats will be available at a maximum amount of PKR 15,000 except for the first T20I where the hospitality seats will be available for PKR 12,000.

For the Lahore leg, ticket prices start at PKR 300 for General seating and the maximum at PKR 6,000 for the fourth T20I while PKR 7,000 for the fifth T20I (VVIP Gallery).

Also, hospitality boxes located at the Far-End building will be available for purchase in Lahore. The hospitality box for Thursday's (25 April) encounter will be available at PKR 600,000, while the box for Saturday's (27 April) match will be available at PKR 700,000.



Mustafa Ali Klair - Pakistan's second best athlete of the year

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Mustafa Ali Klair Continues Family Legacy, Named 2nd Best Athlete of the Year at LGS School JT Branch- Mustafa Ali Klair, carrying forward the esteemed legacy of his father, Mr. Moazzam Khan Klair, has achieved another significant milestone by securing the title of the 2nd best athlete of the year at LGS School JT Branch.

Mustafa's relentless dedication, perseverance, and profound passion for sports have propelled him to this distinguished accolade, further cementing his family's illustrious reputation in the realm of athletics. Expressing his heartfelt gratitude and profound excitement for this remarkable achievement, Mustafa Ali Klair stated, "In Sha Allah, I remain steadfast in my aspiration to proudly represent Pakistan on the international stage, thus perpetuating my family's enduring legacy in sports." He attributed his remarkable success to the benevolent blessings of Allah Almighty and graciously acknowledged the pivotal roles played by his brother, the dedicated coaching staff at the school, and, above all, his parents for their unwavering support at every pivotal juncture of his journey. Mustafa's unwavering commitment to excellence and his resolute determination to uphold Pakistan's honor on the global stage epitomize his unwavering passion and unyielding drive in the realm of sports. His exceptional accomplishments at LGS School JT Branch serve as a poignant testament to his outstanding athletic prowess and steadfast dedication. About Mustafa Ali Klair



Argentina drops Lionel Messi from international friendly against Costa Rica



Argentina captain Lionel Messi will not join his teammates on the field for their international friendly against Costa Rica on Wednesday, Sportstar reported.

The 36-year-old soccer legend recently suffered a leg muscle injury which has kept him out of the international break.

Previously, Messi's unfortunate injury kept him out of action for his club Inter Miami.

When did Messi suffer leg injury?

Earlier this month, the Argentine forward suffered a left ankle twist during Inter Miami's 2-2 draw against Nashville SC in their Concacaf Champions Cup match, leaving him writhing in pain.

His ankle twisted after his left leg was kicked in the calf area by an opposing player.

After his injury, Messi attempted to get back on the field against DC United in a Major League Soccer clash on March 16.

However, he was subbed off in the second-half after scoring a goal as he couldn't bare the pain.

"He is overloaded in the right posterior. We don't want to run a risk. We tried to see if he could go for a little longer, but it was bothering him, so we preferred for him to just get out of the game," Miami head coach Tata Martino said after that match.

When will Messi return? Argentina are set to face Costa Rica at the United Airlines Field at the Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles without Messi.

However, according to Sportstar, reports suggest Messi might be back for Inter Miami for a Champions Cup clash with Monterrey on April 3 but the exact date of Messi's return is yet to be determined.

Pakistan players kick off training in fitness camp at Kakul



Sports Desk

ABBOTTABAD: Pakistan players on Thursday, underwent training in the ongoing physical fitness camp here at Kakul.

According to the details, the Pakistan players underwent training and gym exercises during the fitness camp at the Army School of Physical Training (ASPT).

Taking to X, formerly Twitter, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) shared pictures of the national cricketers undergoing different drills in the fitness camp.

A total of 29 players will

undergo fitness training in the camp, organised in collaboration with the Pakistan Army.

"The camp, organised in collaboration with the Pakistan Army, is strategically designed to prepare the players for the upcoming series and tournaments, including the home T20I series against New Zealand, the away T20I series against Ireland and England, and the forthcoming ICC T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies," the PCB said in a press release.

"The camp will focus on team building and aims to enhance the physical and mental strength of the players,

ensuring they are in the best condition to face the challenges ahead.

"Under the guidance of experienced trainers and coaches, the players will undergo a comprehensive training regime tailored to elevate their fitness levels, agility, leadership, strategic thinking and overall performance on the field."

Pace bowler Mohammad Amir and all-rounder Imad Wasim, who recently came out of retirement, are also included in the camp along with top-order batter Usman Khan.

Pakistan Players taking

part in the Physical fitness camp in Kakul are:

Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Saim Ayub, Fakhar Zaman, Sahibzada Farhan, Haseebullah, Saud Shakeel, Usman Khan, Mohammad Haris, Salman Ali Agha, Azam Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Irfan Khan Niazi, Shadab Khan, Imad Wasim, Usama Mir, Mohammad Nawaz, Mehran Mumtaz, Abrar Ahmed, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Hasan Ali, Mohammad Ali, Zaman Khan, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Aamir Jamal, Haris Rauf and Mohammad Amir.

Novak Djokovic splits from coach Goran Ivanisevic after five years

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Novak Djokovic and Goran Ivanisevic are to go their separate ways, the tennis world number one announced on Wednesday, ending a five-year association which yielded 12 Grand Slams.

Djokovic brought Croatia's 2001 Wimbledon champion on board as a member of the coaching team ahead of the grass court Grand Slam in 2019 and although the Serbian admitted their "on-court chemistry had its ups and downs", it also resulted in huge success.

However, Djokovic has had by his high standards a poor start to the year, losing to eventual champion Jannik Sinner of Italy in the Australian Open semi-finals.

The 36-year-old Serbian then lost to Sinner's unheralded compatriot Luca Nardi in the third round at Indian Wells, prompting him to withdraw from the

Miami tournament for what he claimed were scheduling reasons.

"Goran and I decided to stop working together a few days ago," Djokovic posted on Instagram.

"Our on court chemistry had its ups and downs, but our friendship was always rock solid.

"In fact, I am proud to say (not sure he is) that apart from winning tournaments together, we also had a side battle in Parchisi going on... for many years," he said, referring to the online game.

"And -- that tournament never stops for us. Sejinjo, thanks for everything my friend. Love you."

Novak Djokovic said the volatile and charismatic Goran Ivanisevic had brought more than just his tennis acumen to the partnership, which was exactly what he and his then head coach Marian Vajda had been looking for.

"I remember clearly the moment I invited Goran to be part of my team,"

said Djokovic.

"It was back in 2018, and Marian (Vajda) and I were looking to innovate and bring some serve magic to our duo.

"In fact, not only we brought serve, but also lots of laughter, fun, year end no1 rankings, record breaking achievements and 12 more Grand Slams (and a few finals) to the count since then."

Former off-spinner Sharfuddoula was forced to end his first-class career after just one season in 2001 due to a back injury, and joined the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) as its cricket operations manager.

He quit the BCB job to become an umpire and has so far overseen 10 Tests, 63 one-day internationals, and 44 Twenty20 internationals.

ICC chief Geoff Allardice called it "a well-deserved reward for many years of consistent performances".

On the panel, Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid joins three umpires from

England — Michael Gough, Richard Illingworth and Richard Kettleborough — as well as Australians Paul Reffel and Rodney Tucker.

Also on the panel are Kumar Dharmasena from Sri Lanka, Christopher Gaffaney from New Zealand, Adrian Holdstock from South Africa, Nitin Menon from India, Ahsan Raza from Pakistan and Joel Wilson from the West Indies.

The ICC also said England's Chris Broad had stepped down from its elite panel of match referees.

Broad, who has been on the panel since 2003, has refereed 123 Tests, 361 ODIs, and 135 Twenty20 Internationals.

No explanation was given for Broad's omission, other than a reduction in numbers, with Thursday's announcement marking the end of the former England batsman's 21 years on the elite match referee panel.

The 66-year-old presided over 123



Tests, 361 ODIs and 135 T20s. He also found fame with as the father of England pace-bowling great Stuart Broad.

The ICC's elite panel of match referees is now made up of six members:

David Boon of Australia, Jeff Crowe of New Zealand, Ranjan Madugalle of Sri Lanka, Andy Pycroft of Zimbabwe, Richie Richardson of the West Indies, and Javagal Srinath of India.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms Jane Marriott, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Thursday.



Photo: PID

President for further boosting bilateral cooperation with UK

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has said that Pakistan and the United Kingdom (UK) enjoy cordial relations, rooted in history and shared legacy, which have been reinforced by high-level interactions and people-to-people contacts over the years. He stressed the need to further strength-

en trade and economic ties for the mutual benefit of the two friendly countries.

The President expressed these views while talking to the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms Jane Marriott, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Both sides exchanged views on matters of bilateral importance.

During the meeting, the

President expressed his warm sentiments for His Majesty King Charles III and the Princess of Wales, Catherine Middleton, and wished them good health. He also mentioned that the people of Pakistan held His Majesty the King in high esteem.

Talking about the economic situation of the country, the President stated that the stabilization of the economy

was the priority with a key focus on employment generation and poverty alleviation.

The President highlighted that climate change posed a serious challenge to Pakistan as it was among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. He informed the High Commissioner that Sindh had mangrove forests, covering an area of 600,000 hectares, which support-

ed the coastal ecosystem, besides contributing to environmental sustainability. He said that Pakistan had huge potential for solar and wind energy, and their proper utilization could help the country meet its energy requirements.

Ms Jane Marriott felicitated President Asif Ali Zardari on assuming the office of the President of Pakistan.

PM chairs review meeting on stoppage of electricity theft

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday chaired a high level meeting on stoppage of electricity theft and directed that immediate disciplinary action should be initiated against the officers and exemplary punishment should be given to them for abetting the crime and causing loss of billions of dollars. He said it was their responsibility to create a stable system by taking measures like launching a campaign to stop electricity theft.

The present situation of the economy could not bear the problem of electricity theft, he added.

He said a strategy should be formulated at the earliest



for decreasing line losses and for upgradation of transmission lines.

He said generation companies were a burden on the national exchequer and work should be started on their privatization at the earliest. A report on complete plan for solarization of tubewells

in Balochistan should be presented, he added.

During the meeting, it was decided to install smart meters on transformers under the public sector development programme. Feeder monitors would be deployed at the feeders which were causing huge losses.

A whole of the government approach was adopted during the campaign to stop theft of electricity. Under the electricity anti-theft campaign, 45,777 people in Punjab, 1250 in Sindh, 5121 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 181 were arrested in Balochistan. During the campaign, 350 personnel

of distribution companies were suspended for their bad performance or abetment.

It was told that the task forces set up at district and division levels for stopping theft of electricity would be given part of the recovery amount for their good performance. Federal Minister for Power Awais Ahmed Leghari, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema, Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Industry and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Petroleum Musadiq Malik and relevant officers attended the meeting.

You Hang meet with Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Finance Minister, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with Mr. You Hang, the Chief Representative of China Financial Futures Exchange (CFFEX) in Pakistan, and Director of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), today. The meeting focused on enhancing cooperation and exploring new opportunities for strengthening Pakistan's financial markets and investment landscape.

During the meeting, Finance Minister Aurangzeb and Chief Representative Hang engaged in detailed discussions on various aspects of financial market development, including the potential for collaboration between CFFEX and PSX to promote innovative financial instruments in Pakistan.

Minister Aurangzeb highlighted the government's commitment to implementing reforms aimed at improving the regulatory framework, enhancing market transparency, and facilitating the development of a vibrant and resilient financial sector in Pakistan.

Chief Representative Hang expressed CFFEX's keen interest in collaborating with PSX and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for launching new financial products, sharing technical expertise, and promoting cross-border investment between China and Pakistan. He reaffirmed CFFEX's commitment to supporting the development of Pakistan's financial markets and contributing to the country's economic prosperity.

Shaza, CRO Zong discuss matters related to 5G, digitalization

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani actress, Sahiba Afzal, has revealed that she recently met her biological father for the first time.

In her previous interviews, Sahiba has expressed that she was raised by her stepfather. In a recent video posted to her YouTube channel, Sahiba shared that met with her father, Inam Rabbani, for the first time on March 11.

She felt emotional while seeing her father for the first time and introduced him to his son-in-law and grandson as well. Rabbani bantered with his grandson, calling him a taller person than him at his age.

Inam Rabbani looked satisfied while spending time with his family as they had dinners, outings and gossip. Sahiba gifted their shared moments in a photo frame and also gifted him some clothes.

Pakistan actress Sahiba connects with her father for the first time

City Desk

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Rain-windstorm/thunderstorm likely at various parts of country

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast rain-windstorms/thunderstorms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir, Punjab, Islamabad and north Balochistan.

Heavy falls are expected at isolated places in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir.

Dust storms/dust-raising winds are likely in southern parts of the country.

Moderate to heavy rainfall may trigger landslides in Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Murree, Galiyat, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan and may affect the vulnerable points during March 29 (evening/night) and March 30.

Windstorms/hailstorms and lightning may damage standing crops, loose structures like electric poles, vehicles and solar panels etc.

Tourists and farmers are advised to remain cautious during the wet period.

F-16s will be shot down, warns Putin

Reuters

MOSCOW: Russia has no designs on any NATO country and will not attack Poland, the Baltic States or the Czech Republic but if the West supplies F-16 fighters to Ukraine then they will be shot down by Russian forces, President Vladimir Putin said late on Wednesday.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has triggered the deepest crisis in Russia's relations with the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

Speaking to Russian air force pilots, Putin said the U.S.-led military alliance had expanded eastwards towards Russia since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union but that Moscow had no plans to attack a NATO state.

Asked about F-16 fighters which the West has promised to send to Ukraine, Putin said such aircraft would not change the situation in Ukraine.

"And we will destroy the aircraft just as we destroy today tanks, armoured vehicles and other equipment, including multiple rocket



launchers."

Putin said that F-16 could also carry nuclear weapons.

"Of course, if they will be used from airfields in third countries, they become for us legitimate targets, wherever they might be located," Putin said.

Putin's remarks followed comments earlier in the day by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba that the aircraft should arrive in Ukraine in the coming months.

Ukraine, now more than two years into a full-fledged war against Russia, has sought F-16s for many months.

Belgium, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands are among countries which have pledged to donate F-16s. A coalition of countries has promised to help train Ukrainian pilots in their use.

Govt. taking every possible step to increase IT exports, FDI: Shaza

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Thursday said that the present government was diligently pursuing measures to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and boost IT exports. During a discussion with a high-level delegation from the Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), led by its Chairman, Muhammad Zohaib Khan, Shaza Fatima highlighted the critical role of the IT industry, particularly in providing international-level training to youth and creating employment opportunities for them.

The Chairman P@SHA extended congratulations to Minister of State for IT, Shaza Fatima Khawaja for



assuming the office.

The minister said that Pakistan's IT professionals can serve as the premier choice for international companies and urged P@SHA to assist in bridging the demand-supply gap of IT professionals. Zohaib Khan reaffirmed P@SHA's commitment to collaborating with the Ministry of IT for the economic stability of the country. He commended Minister of State for IT, Shaza Fatima, for her dedicated efforts in promoting the IT industry.

President for developing Pakistan's gems and jewellery sector

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for focusing on the development of the Gems and Jewellery sector of the country, saying that exporting value-added products can help Pakistan earn valuable foreign exchange. He also urged the need for better marketing and projection of gemstone products from Pakistan.

The President expressed these views during a meeting regarding the development of the Gems and Jewellery sector in Pakistan. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Pakistan Gems

and Jewellery Development Company (PGJDC), Mr Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry, and senior government officials attended the meeting.

CEO of PGJDC apprised the meeting about the strategic plan for the development of the Gems and Jewellery sector, besides highlighting various challenges and opportunities in this regard.

The President urged the need to focus on the training and skill enhancement of the local workforce, besides promoting diversification and industrialization of the gems and jewellery sector to increase its contribution to the country's economy.

'Crypto king' Bankman-Fried gets 25-year sentence for orchestrating \$8b fraud

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Disgraced cryptocurrency wunderkind Sam Bankman-Fried was sentenced to 25 years in jail on Thursday following his conviction in one of the biggest financial fraud cases in history.

US prosecutors were seeking a prison term of 40-50 years after a New York jury found Bankman-Fried, known by his initials SBF, guilty in November following a five-week trial that probed the one-time high roller's spectacular fall.

During the hearing Bankman-Fried told the courtroom that he was "sorry about what happened at every stage. And there are things I should've done and things I shouldn't have."

The final sentence was meted out by US District Judge Lewis Kaplan who used the hearing to carefully walk through the financial crimes committed by Bankman-Fried. With the sentencing now done, Bankman-Fried is expected to appeal his conviction.

A New York jury found Bankman-Fried guilty in November following the lengthy trial that probed his stunning downfall.

Calling Bankman-Fried's seven-count conviction reflective of the



defendant's "unmatched greed and hubris," the government's sentencing request argued for significant jail time in light of fraud it estimates at more than \$10 billion.

Moreover, a lengthy sentence is necessary to "protect the public," argued US Attorney Damian Williams, who characterized Bankman-Fried as an "adept" spin doctor capable of additional malfeasance.

Calling the government's proposed sentence "barbaric," Bankman-Fried's attorneys depicted their client as a diligent young man motivated by philanthropy who got in over his head.

Their portrayal is similar to the one SBF's defense presented at trial - which was quickly rejected by jurors after just five hours of deliberation.

Bankman-Fried's attorney had asked for six years in prison, a sentence "that returns Sam promptly to a productive role in society," said attorneys led by Marc Mukasey.